

# City Projects U+P+D+A+T+E

CITY OF ROCKVILLE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2001

## Cabin John Sewer Approval Opens Possibilities for Future

Years of work and study by City of Rockville staff, outside consultants and a community committee of citizens led to the Mayor and Council giving approval July 9 to a plan that will upgrade and enlarge a sewer line that extends through the Cabin John neighborhood. However, that unanimous decision could have far-reaching effects on Rockville's future.

The City's portion of the Cabin John Trunk Sewer was installed in the mid-1950s. It is located in the environmentally-sensitive headwaters of the Cabin John Watershed. This line will ultimately serve several of the major development projects of Rockville, including the revitalized downtown area and the Tower Oaks properties.

Although Rockville's section of the line is currently neither in disrepair, or over taxed, the City's focus is on the future. Staff and consultants analyzed 10 alternatives for each of the three zones crossed by the line (town center, residential and wooded stream valley). Each alternative considered the cost and community impacts in regard to traffic, trees, streams, wetlands and other concerns.

The Mayor and Council agreed with the staff and community committee recommendations for Alternative 2 for each of the three zones. Those plans will involve construction of a new parallel sewer while abandoning the existing sewer in place.

Prior to considering the issue, the

Mayor and Council listened to opinions from numerous residents who live in the Cabin John area of Montgomery County outside of the city's boundaries. Those citizens raised a number of concerns. All of their points had previously been considered in the many alternative studies.

"We share some of their concerns," said Susan Straus, Rockville's chief environmental engineer. "We will look at the opportunities to include some positive environmental changes, such as stream restoration.

Councilmember Glennon Harrison reflected the sentiment of the Mayor and Council in noting that extraordinary outreach efforts had been exerted throughout the study stages to invite input of citizens and groups representing Rockville residents and impacted residents who were not citizens of Rockville. He felt comfortable that the plan approved had the support of residents.

"My own sense is that the community group's recommendation is the right one," he said.

During the design stage, the City will consider installing a path near the trunk line area in the stream valley section of the project. The design of the sewer line will aim toward minimizing tree and wetland impacts. Citizen input will continue to be sought.

"The sewer has to be fixed," said Councilmember Anne Robbins. "That is a reality. But we do want to work with the Friends of Cabin John." ■



## Bikeway Master Plan Pushes the Pedal

For many, the thought of abandoning a car to ride a bike or walk to work, go shopping, or get to a friend's house is non-existent. But with the progress being made on three major components of the Mayor and Council's adopted Bikeway Master Plan, getting around Rockville by foot and by pedal-powered machine is becoming a reality.

Work began in June on a 2.5-mile section of the 10-mile Millennium Trail that runs along Wootton Parkway, from Falls Road to Darnestown Road.

The City of Rockville received a grant of \$741,732 of Transportation Enhancement Program funds through the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to help construct this phase of the trail as well as trail-related amenities such as landscaping, benches and water fountains. The Transportation Enhancement Program is authorized by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21), which annually provides the State of Maryland with \$8 million for the provision of state-wide transportation-related amenities, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Construction of the section of the Millennium Trail along Norbeck Road from Gude Drive to Wootton Parkway will begin in late spring/early summer 2002. Funding for the final section of the trail, along First Street and Wootton Parkway, is being sought. Design and construction timelines will be determined when funding is secured.

In addition to linking Rockville neighborhoods and improving bicycle access throughout the city, the Rockville Millennium Trail will serve as a regional connector, providing access to the Rock Creek Hiker/Biker Trail, the Great Seneca Highway Trail and other regional routes. It will provide an important, non-auto oriented alternative for residents seeking to reach nearby centers of employment,

schools, shopping and parks and will facilitate access to the Metrorail system.

Design on the Route 28 pedestrian/bike bridge, which will connect the Hurley Avenue and Nelson Street bikeways over Interstate 270, has begun. Currently the design includes a bridge that is separated from car traffic over I-270 and two smaller elevated bridges over the on-off ramps on the south side on the interstate.

"The separated paths will eliminate the need to cross at-grade and travel with traffic along the ramps," said Betsy Thompson, the City's bikeway coordinator. "This is the safest thing we could possibly do because of the speed people travel on I-270."

The City has applied for federal funding to construct the bridge, which is anticipated in 2003 to 2004, pending the grant's approval. The City is seeking citizen participation to assist with designing the project.

Beyond the physical pathways, the Bikeway Master Plan also includes several other key elements to help integrate the bikeways into the community and make them safe for bikers, pedestrians and motorists. Signs are being installed along bike paths to identify the roads as bikeways and help direct users between neighborhoods, schools and shopping areas. Bike racks are being installed at retail and recreation facilities.

The City also has implemented an aggressive safety program geared toward youth, drivers and bicyclists. The program includes distributing pamphlets on bicycle safety in schools, conducting safety rallies and, if funded by the State of Maryland, a pilot program to include bicycle and pedestrian safety education as part of the annual curriculum for grades kindergarten through five in Rockville City schools. ■

CALL 301-309-3344 FOR MORE INFO



Photo Credit: Julie Bell. Ruthie, the opossum, shown courtesy of Second Chance Wildlife Center.

### A Real Natural

**Valerie Oliver, the director of the Croydon Creek Nature Center, holds an opossum. Oliver has a bachelor's degree from Penn State in Recreation and Parks, Environmental Interpretation, and a master's from the University of Maryland in Outdoor Recreation. The Nature Center is scheduled to open this fall. See story on page 2.**



# Recreation and Parks Projects

## Hungerford

**Elwood Smith Community Center**  
Construction underway • completion in September • will include general renovations, accessibility upgrades, added meeting/activities room, restroom renovations, storage and roof replacement • add security lighting in parking lot

## Dawson Farm Park

Replacement of the existing wooden bridge • addition of interpretive historical signs and artwork • partial reconstruction of the original granary

## Twinbrook

**Street Tree Replacement**  
Ongoing multi-year project • includes removing and replacing trees deemed hazardous, in major decline, or severely damaged by utilities

## King Farm

**King Farm Park**  
Construction underway on 12-acre site • includes basketball and tennis courts, soccer and baseball fields, and picnic and open areas • completion in fall 2001

## General Projects

**Beall-Dawson Historical Park**  
Realign and replace brick walkways to correct safety issues • create a dooryard on northwest side of the house • install period lighting

## Millennium Trail

Completion in September • includes trail on Wootton Parkway from Falls Road to Glen Mill Road • Phase II, located on Norbeck Road from Gude Drive to Wootton Pkwy, received funding of \$735,000 • final design underway

**I-270/Route 28 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge**  
Separate bridge parallel to Route 28 on south side across I-270 • will connect to Hurley Avenue and Nelson Street bikeways • under design

**Parks Topographical, Tree and Boundary Survey**  
Update the topographical data for parks and grounds in the Rock Creek watershed • information gathered will provide for planning, asset inventory, and maintenance • will be completed in early summer

**Croydon Creek Nature Center**  
Located at Rockville Civic Center Park • construction underway, with completion in October and opening in November

**Rockville Senior Center**  
Expand dining room • soundproof card and computer rooms • renovate kitchen • planning to begin in fall 2001, construction in winter 2002

**Playground Equipment Improvements**  
Replace equipment at Lone Oak and Welsh Parks during summer 2001 • replace equipment at Isreal Park, Dogwood Park upper play area, and Broome Park • planning and design in fall 2001, construction in winter-spring 2002

**RedGate Golf Course-Bunker Renovation Project**  
Design phase completed • scheduled for bidding in September 2001

**City Hall Expansion**  
Includes construction of a new wing and renovations to the existing building to accommodate overcrowding and future staff • plan includes a new entrance on Maryland Avenue • will allow for technology and energy upgrades • various options for accommodating additional required parking being studied, focusing on on-site solutions • parking demand reduction strategies being implemented • in the design and engineering phase

**Rockville Senior Center**  
Expand dining room • soundproof card and computer rooms

**I-270/Route 28 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge**  
Separate bridge parallel to Route 28 on south side across I-270 • will connect to Hurley Avenue and Nelson Street bikeways • under design • renovate kitchen • planning to begin in fall 2001, construction in winter 2002

**Asphalt and Concrete Projects**  
Repave the entrance to the Indoor Swim Center and the Senior Center • to be completed in August 2001

**Athletic Courts**  
Recolor the basketball courts at Broome, College Gardens, Croydon, Dogwood, Elwood Smith, Monument, and Orchard RidgePark and the Senior Center • to be started by August 2001

**Gude Drive Maintenance Facility**  
Replace salt dome • relocate material storage yard and salt box hangers • create new entrance to complex • improve offices • install stormwater management

CALL **301-309-3330** FOR MORE INFO



*Jim Bosworth, from the City’s Recreation and Parks staff, ensures construction of the Croydon Creek Nature Center progresses as planned.*

# Nature Center Set for Autumn Opening

It may not have lions and tigers and bears, but Rockville’s new Croydon Creek Nature Center, scheduled to open in November 2001, will have a variety of snakes, turtles, toads, salamanders, and fish native to the Maryland region as well as much more to entertain and educate people of all ages.

While the building is currently in the beginning stages of construction, when complete, the City’s first nature center will include a classroom for programs, an exhibit room for older youth and adults and a discovery room specifically geared toward young children. The exhibit room and discovery room will feature hands-on, interactive interpretive exhibits. Many of the exhibits will be permanent. However, some features will change regularly. For example, there will be a permanent research desk, which will offer a variety of research projects over time.

“Initially, the research desk will probably have some animal skulls for people to look at and touch to determine if it was a carnivore, herbivore or omnivore,” said Nature Center Supervisor Valerie Oliver. “It also will have a section on the classification system and the use of Latin names to describe plants and animals.”

Oliver says visitors also can expect to be able to use a “rubbing table” with four granite stones that will change with the seasons. Using a piece of paper and crayon, impressions can be made of the image—like rubbing a penny. In addition, the center will feature information about urban wildlife issues and a computer where participants can learn more about natural history, hear wild bird calls, find out interesting facts about the earth, and much more.

Plans for the future include a wildlife garden, a rain/wetlands garden and outside interpretive trail and exhibits. If federal and state permits are granted, Oliver hopes to



*A deer watches construction at the Nature Center.*

have permanently injured, non-releasable birds of prey as part of the nature center exhibits.

The nature center is located in Rockville Civic Center Park, behind the tennis courts by Glenview Mansion. It will be open to the general public, school groups, scout troops, and special interest groups Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m, and Sundays from 1 to 6 p.m.

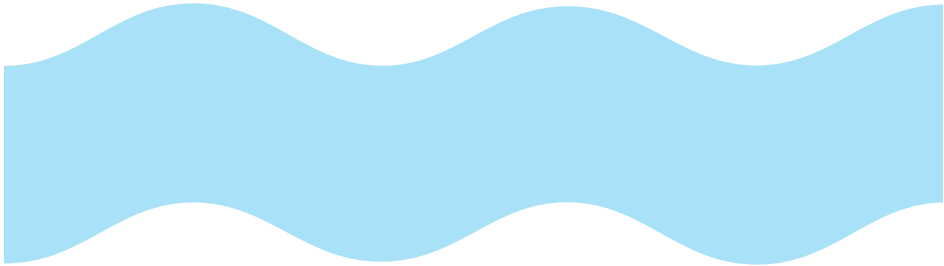
Programs will cover all age groups, with some just for 3 to 6 year olds, others for 6 to 12 year olds, some for all ages, and some just for adults.

Admission will be free to the nature center, but some on-site programs and most field trips will require fees.

Watch for more information about the grand opening of the Croydon Creek Nature Center in future issues of *Rockville Reports* and on The Rockville Channel. ■

CALL **301-545-5691** FOR MORE INFO

**Volunteers Needed:** The nature center is currently looking for volunteers and staff to work at the center as well as exhibit sponsors.



# Water Plant Prepares for City’s Increased Water Needs

With new developments like King Farm and Fallsgrove, comes new businesses, homes, and, of course, people who all require water for daily needs. Rockville has planned for this increased water need and has already set the wheels in motion to implement the plan.

Currently, the City’s customers average throughout the year, approximately 5 million gallons per day. This is about 3 million gallons less than the maximum amount of water the City is legally allowed to draw from the Potomac River.

“When the weather is warm and dry, we will easily use our maximum of 8 million gallons a day for days on end,” said Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Bill Sizemore. “With new customers expanding the city’s population, we need to be able to increase the amount of water we can intake from the Potomac each day for these intense water usage periods.”

The City must do two things to make this happen. First, the Water Plant must be upgraded and renovated so it can physically pump more

water each day. In the past two years, the City has completely rebuilt the intake structure, which pumps water from the Potomac River to the plant, and upgraded two clarifiers. Next spring, the plant’s filters will be completely rehabilitated, the pumps that bring finished drinking water in through the distribution system to the city will be replaced and a booster station on Glen Mill Road will be built.

Second, the Maryland Department of the Environment must approve the City’s request to increase its maximum intake from the Potomac River from 8 million gallons per day to 14, when necessary. This is the first increase the City has asked for since the plant began operation in the 1950s. The process includes a public hearing (date to be announced) where residents and other interested parties may offer their input about the request. While the increase may seem substantial, Sizemore does not expect to use the maximum daily water appropriation except for very extreme circumstances. ■

CALL 301-309-3080 FOR MORE INFO

## Common Sense Tips to Help Water Conservation

Regardless of the amount of water the City pulls from the Potomac River each day, water conservation is essential to preserve our natural resources. Following are some basic tips to help save water without changing your lifestyle:

- Install a water restrictor on your shower head.
- Run larger loads in your dishwasher and washing machine.
- Use a broom, not a hose, when cleaning your driveway.
- Shut off the water while you are brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving.
- When mowing your lawn, raise the blade on your lawn mower to at least three inches high, or to its highest level. Closely-cut grass makes the roots work harder, requiring more water.
- For landscaping, use native or other low water use plants. Check with your local nursery for the best native or low-water use trees, shrubs, and plants.
- Always water during the coolest time of the day to minimize evaporation. Early morning is best. Peak water consumption hours (4-9 p.m.) should be avoided.
- Verify that your home is leak free. Read your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, there is a leak.
- Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. If your faucet is dripping at a rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year.
- Install a toilet dam or displacement device such as a bag or bottle to cut down on the amount of water needed for each flush. Be sure installation does not interfere with the operating parts. When purchasing new or replacement toilets, consider low-volume units, which use less than half the water of older models.
- When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Quickly rinse under a slow-moving stream from the faucet.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator. Do not let the tap run while waiting for cool water to flow.
- Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or use the defrost setting on your microwave instead of thawing it with warm running water.



## Public Works Projects

### Town Center

**Maryland Avenue Extension**  
Roadway design specifications to extend Maryland Avenue from Middle Ln. to Beall Avenue • currently on hold • orientation analysis being conducted

### East Rockville

**Horners Lane Water Tank Removal**  
Contract awarded • construction to begin in August • Recreation and Parks working with neighborhoods to determine use of land

### Highland Avenue

Contract awarded • construction to begin in the fall after Horners Lane tank removal project is complete • replace gravel road with curb, gutter, and asphalt roadway

### West End

**Great Falls Road Project**  
Utility relocation work underway • includes bike path, curb and gutter, and safety improvements

### General Projects

**Water Main Work**  
Will strengthen water distribution system and improve fire flows on Chapman Avenue and Jefferson Street • main to be replaced later this year • cleaning and lining project on Route 355 (Middle Lane to North Washington Street) bid was awarded in July • work to begin in August

### Baltimore Road

Adding on-street parking, curb and gutter, traffic calming measures, and bike path sidewalk between First Street and Broadwood Drive • upgrading existing bike path between Gladstone Drive and the city limits

### Wootton Parkway Widening

Staff evaluating next stage of widening Wootton Parkway from Hurley Avenue to Scott Drive in fiscal year 2002 • evaluating demand, establishing citizen work groups, and designing • resident input sought and to be incorporated • other work this summer includes installation of a traffic signal and construction of a right turn lane on Scott Drive • Wootton Parkway to be extended to tie into Darnestown Road

### Asphalt Program

All milling is complete • approximately 50 percent of the asphalt overlay is complete

### Mount Vernon Stormwater Management (SWM)

To improve Cabin John Creek by making modifications to existing SWM • sanitary sewer to be replaced and enlarged

### Cabin John Sanitary Sewer

Design will begin this summer for upgrading the portion of the sewer south of Wootton Parkway • construction in summer 2002

CALL 301-309-3220 FOR MORE INFO

## Important City of Rockville Phone Numbers

Here are some important City of Rockville numbers that you might want to cut out and stick on the refrigerator for later reference:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Emergency Water/Sewer .....              | 301-309-3093 |
| Emergency Public Works Maintenance ..... | 301-309-3020 |
| Neighborhood Services .....              | 301-309-3115 |
| Parks Administration .....               | 301-309-3330 |
| Public Works Administration .....        | 301-309-3220 |
| Public Works Operations .....            | 301-309-3010 |
| Public Works Utilities .....             | 301-309-3022 |
| Refuse/Recycling .....                   | 301-309-3094 |
| Tree Maintenance Requests .....          | 301-309-3033 |
| Water Treatment Plant .....              | 301-309-3080 |





*The King Farm development is an important part of Rockville’s future. Preserving the site’s farmstead will keep ties to the area’s past.*

# City and Residents Ponder the Future of Historic King Farmstead

If you have driven by the King Farm recently, you may have noticed that in addition to all the homes, office buildings and retail stores being constructed, there is some activity happening around the five-acre park/farmstead area on Route 355.

The most obvious improvement is repainting the barns, including the faded “Milk for Thompson’s Dairy” advertisement on the roof. This is a clear indicator of Rockville’s future in incorporating its past.

Since taking ownership of the property donated by the King Farm developer, the City has begun stabilizing the buildings and making some basic improvements while a decision is made on the long-term re-use of the site. The City is removing lead paint, making the

roofs watertight, adding security, and doing other minor repairs.

The improvements are starting with the most important structures—the main house, which is still occupied by a renter, and the two Wisconsin dairy barns. However, the site also includes a multi-car garage, a silo, two smaller barns, a chicken coop, some shed-type storage buildings, and two smaller houses.

“Our motivation to take possession of this site was to preserve this last vestige of Rockville’s agrarian history,” said Director of Recreation and Parks Burt Hall. “If the City had not accepted it, the developer would likely have demolished most or all of the buildings and incorporated the site into the development. The barns with ‘Milk for

Thompson’s Dairy’ have been there for decades, and now this important view and vista will be preserved for future generations.”

To help determine the future use of the site, the City retained a consultant to develop a master plan for all of the parks in the King Farm. The study produced an historical report on the farmstead site and the King Farm in general. Citizens then participated in a meeting to look at possible re-uses of the farmstead site.

Some of the ideas presented included: a community/senior/fitness center, a meeting/conference center, a library, City offices/storage/public works depot, a museum or visitors’ center, an arts center, a foundation or association headquarters/offices, or an arts/crafts mall.

“Conversion of the barns or the main house for an adaptive re-use is going to be expensive,” said Hall. “It will be important to identify a use that captures the interest of a wide cross section of Rockville residents if the City is going to spend a lot of money on the site.”

A less expensive option for the City, according to Hall, is turning over the site to a foundation or a non-profit organization that would preserve, maintain, and allow public access to the buildings, but would only involve Rockville taxpayers to a small extent.

Following the citizen meeting, the Mayor and Council formed a task force composed of members of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, Cultural Arts Commission, and Historic District Commission. The task force also includes King Farm residents. The Mayor and Council asked the group to study and make recommendations for the long term adaptive re-uses of the site. This will start in September. ■

CALL **301-309-3330** FOR MORE INFO



*The Wisconsin dairy barns at King Farm have been repainted to include the rooftop advertisement “Milk for Thompson’s Dairy.” This is one of the farm’s most recognizable features.*

## The History of King Farm

In 1925, Lawson King and his wife Cordelia Elizabeth King purchased the King Farm from the Graff family, who had owned and farmed the land since 1822. The Kings purchased an additional 300 acres surrounding their 122.5 acres and converted the property to a dairy farm.

Because there were other farms named King Farm, they named it “Irvington Farm,” after Cordelia’s brother, Irving.

By 1950, Irvington Farm had grown to be one of the largest dairy farms in the state of Maryland, and Lawson King owned the largest herd of holsteins in the United States at the time.

When Lawson King died in 1985, his family was forced to sell the farm to pay inheritance taxes on the land.

While the farm often was called King Farm by residents in the area, the property did not officially become the King Farm until the developers purchased the land in August 1995 and renamed it. ■

## Goodbye Water Tank, Hello Park

For about the past 50 years, the Horners Lane water tank has eclipsed the skyline for nearby residents in East Rockville. Beginning this summer, however, residents will begin to see a very different view.

Three projects are planned for the area beginning in late August. The projects include removing the Horners Lane water tank, replacing it with a park and making improvements to Highland Road.

The first project involves taking down the Horners Lane water tank to make room for the passive park area planned for the space. The tank, which has not been used for more than three years, will be removed beginning in late August. According to a 1994 Pitometer Study of the City’s water distribution system, the tank, which was in poor structural condition, was unnecessary, and the study recommended removal. The basketball court as well as the walkway through the park and adjacent to the tank will be closed during the

demolition process. The play equipment will not be affected by this project.

After demolition of the tank, the City will install a new park. Following input of citizens at a meeting in August 2000, it was decided that grass will be planted in the area where the tank stood. Trees will be planted adjacent to private property in the area behind the tank and will wrap around to Highland Avenue.

The final phase of the project, which staff hopes will begin in September, will bring much needed improvements to Highland Avenue. The road is currently a gravel street, which does not meet City code. When completed, residents will have a newly-constructed paved 26-foot-wide road, a sidewalk, a handicap ramp, curbs and gutters and a storm drain structure. The City also will install new trees as part of the City’s Street Tree Master Plan. ■

CALL **301-309-3037** FOR MORE INFO  
• OR •  
CALL **301-309-3234** FOR MORE INFO



*The Horners Lane water tank will soon be demolished to make way for a new City park.*